BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BC Stats

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Current Statistics ◆ February 2008

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate inched down to 4.1% in January; a decline of 0.1 percentage points from the previous month.** This change in the jobless rate came about as growth in employment (+0.5%), in particular full-time positions (+0.9%), outpaced the increase in the number of people either working or looking for work (+0.4%) last month.

  British Columbia's unemployment rate remains among the lowest in the country as jobless rates in the western provinces continue to be well below the national average (5.8%).

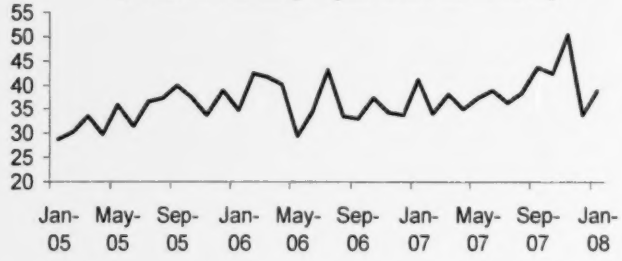
  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Employment in BC's goods sector jumped ahead by 1.2% in January as manufacturing, the province's largest employer in the goods sector, expanded (+1.9%) for the first time since September of 2007.** The forestry, mining & fishing industry, on the other hand, shed jobs (-5.5%), while the number of workers in construction remained relatively unchanged (-0.1%) from the previous month.

  The province's services sector also recorded solid growth (+0.4%) as most industries in the sector saw an increase in employment. While the number of jobs in the trade industry declined (-2.7%) for the third consecutive month, employment increased in the professional, scientific & technical (+6.9%), education services (+4.6%) and health care & social assistance (+4.4%) industries. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Housing starts in the province are expected to slow (-15.2%) in 2008 and dip again (-4.7%) in 2009, according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).** Higher land prices along with the rising cost of labour and materials will push housing prices higher. CMHC forecasts that the number of single-unit home starts in BC will drop (-14.5%) in 2008 as is expected to be the case for multiple-unit homes (-15.6%). Likewise, CMHC predicts that re-sales of existing homes will be somewhat lower (-7.6%) though remain at above-average levels in 2008 as mortgage rates rise. *Data Source: CMHC*

BC Housing Starts (000s)
(SAAR - seasonally adjusted at annual rates)



- **The value of building permits issued by municipalities in British Columbia rose 20.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December.** Increases were recorded in the value of residential permits (+20.4%), while a jump in the value of commercial sector permits (+51.3%) outweighed declines in the industrial (-12.3%) and institutional (-15.0%) sectors, pushing the total value of non-residential intentions higher by 21.6%.

  There was considerable variability in the value of building permits among the province's urban centres. While Vancouver (+30.2%) and Kelowna (+20.6%) reported significant gains in December, the value of planned building projects in both Abbotsford (-17.6%) and Victoria (-45.5%) was down sharply. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

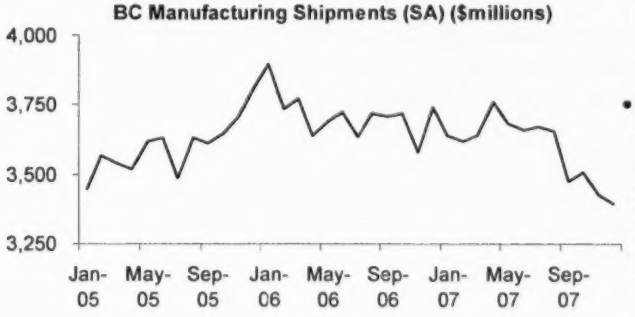
- **BC product exports dropped 8.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, as shipments to the US (-5.4%) declined for the sixth straight month while exports to overseas destinations**

plummeted (-13.1%). Energy product exports to the US (-19.8%) and other countries (-18.3%) plunged, accounting for much of the overall decline. US-bound forest product exports were also off (-5.5%) in December, as were exports of most other types of commodities.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia edged down (-0.9%, *seasonally adjusted*) in December, following a 2.2% downturn in the previous month.** Producers of durable products continued to experience instability, with shipments falling (-2.1%) for a sixth straight month. The value of wood shipments (-3.9%) dropped, as prices for softwood and other wood products remained low. Producers of fabricated metals (-4.9%), computer & electronic products (-7.7%) and non-metallic minerals (-10.3%) posted big declines. On the non-durables side (+0.4%), shipments by paper (+2.8%) and food (+0.9%) producers were up, but other industries did not fare as well.

Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **British Columbia's inflation rate fell to a six-year-low of 0.8% in January.** The year-over-year increase in the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) was less than half the national average (2.2%) and well below the rates recorded in the rest of Canada.

  Energy costs (+2.2%) continued to push prices up in BC, but the overall effect was relatively modest. Excluding energy, the provincial inflation rate was 0.7%.

  Homeowner insurance (+3.1%) and fuel oil (+7.5%) helped drive up shelter costs (+2.5%) in January. The price of food advanced 0.7% as groceries (+0.7%) and restaurant meals (+0.6%) became more expensive. The rising price of gasoline (+6.1%) contributed to a 1.1% increase in the transportation index, and may also have been a factor in higher public transportation fares (+3.2%). Alcoholic beverages & tobacco products (+0.8%) and recreation, education & reading materials (+0.3%) also took a bigger bite out of the household budget. However, clothing & footwear (-3.0%), household operations, furnishings & equipment (-0.5%), and health & personal care products & services (-0.2%) were less expensive than they were 12 months earlier.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Retailers in BC ended the year on a high note, as sales increased 1.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December.** Sales at gasoline stations and pharmacies & personal care stores were strong enough to push past weaker numbers recorded at supermarkets and specialized building material & garden stores. Nationally, retail sales rose 0.6% as large gains were made in the automotive sector.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wholesale sales in the province were down 7.5% (*seasonally adjusted*) to $4.2 billion in December, their lowest level since November 2006.** Weaker demand for building materials, machinery & electronic equipment, and automotive products contributed to the decline. Nationally, sales decreased in all provinces except New Brunswick (+1.7%), pulling the national average into negative territory (-2.9%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Provincial room revenues advanced (+1.6%, *seasonally adjusted*) for the third consecutive month in October.** Most regions experienced gains, including Cariboo (+8.2%), Kootenay (+3.5%), Mainland/Southwest (+2.9%), Nechako (+1.9%) and North Coast (+1.0%). Growth in Thompson/Okanagan (+0.1%) was relatively flat, while Northeast (-3.7%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (-1.5%) saw a drop in receipts.

  Data Source: BC Stats

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	Jan '08	109.9	-0.2	0.8	109.9	0.8
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	Jan '08	110.2	-0.3	1.1	110.2	1.1
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	Jan '08	109.4	-0.3	0.3	109.4	0.3
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	Jan '08	111.8	-0.2	2.2	111.8	2.2
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Dec '07	210.0	-0.1	4.1	207.3	2.9
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Dec '07	114.2	1.1	-0.9	115.5	1.5
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Jan '08	4.1	(4.2)	(4.3)	4.1	(4.3)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Jan '08	5.8	(6.0)	(6.2)	5.8	(6.2)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Jan '08	4.9	(5.0)	(4.6)	4.9	(4.6)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '08	97.7	-2.9	-2.6	97.7	-2.6
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '08	2,305.2	0.5	2.4	2,305.2	2.4
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '08	2,402.9	0.4	2.2	2,402.9	2.2
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Jan '08	66.6	(66.4)	(66.4)	66.6	(66.4)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Dec '07	68.0	38.9	14.7	57.9	-4.1
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Dec '07	44,010	16.2	-8.0	40,563	-8.6
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Jan '08	771.68	2.1	3.8	771.68	3.8
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '07	7,193.0	0.5	6.1	7,101.0	6.2
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Dec '07	127.6	0.8	3.5	124.5	3.7
PRODUCTION - BC							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Dec '07	2,147.1	-17.0	-19.4	3,056.4	-10.7
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '07	397	12.8	11.8	393	-0.4
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '07	54	5.9	-46.0	71	-20.1
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '07	160	-3.6	1.3	160	-2.2
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '07	2,232.0	8.4	17.9	2,135.7	20.8
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Oct '07	121.5	1.8	-9.9	129.6	-7.5
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Mar '07	2,814.2	8.9	-3.5	2,727.4	-3.5
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Nov '07	6,224.3	2.4	7.6	5,908.8	16.9
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Dec '07	3,395.1	-0.9	-9.2	3,593.7	-3.2
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '08	38.9	14.7	-5.4	38.9	-5.4
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '08	1,012.0	0.8	-27.9	1,012.0	-27.9
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '07	1,085.0	20.8	28.8	1,045.0	8.7
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '07	735.4	20.4	19.4	716.0	12.8
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '07	349.6	21.6	54.3	329.0	0.7
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Dec '07	4,817.6	1.1	7.5	4,698.5	7.1
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Dec '07	4,212.6	-7.5	-1.1	4,440.0	5.0
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Oct '07	166,932	1.6	6.5	163,197	8.3
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '07	38	-17.4	2.7	39	-19.9
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '07	480	-17.2	9.8	554	-5.3
Incorporations-BC	Number	Jan '08	2,492	5.4	-1.4	2,492	-1.4
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '07	2,237.7	-8.8	-21.7	2,606.9	-6.5

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*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.
**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.
Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
		2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
PRICES								
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	110.0	108.1	106.3	104.2	1.8	1.7	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	110.2	108.0	106.0	104.0	2.0	1.9	1.9
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	109.8	108.5	106.9	104.6	1.2	1.5	2.2
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	111.5	109.1	107.0	104.7	2.2	2.0	2.2
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	207.3	201.6	195.3	188.9	2.9	3.2	3.4
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	115.5	113.8	111.2	109.5	1.5	2.3	1.6
LABOUR								
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.2	4.8	5.9	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.0	6.3	6.8	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	4.6	4.6	5.1	5.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	100.0	109.6	132.9	159.2	-8.8	-17.5	-16.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,266.3	2,195.5	2,130.5	2,062.7	3.2	3.1	3.3
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,366.4	2,305.1	2,263.4	2,221.9	2.7	1.8	1.9
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	66.3	65.7	65.6	65.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	1,561.6	1,564.2	1,650.3	1,764.0	-0.2	-5.2	-6.4
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	694.3	723.7	837.4	960.4	-4.1	-13.6	-12.8
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	747.84	726.02	704.49	686.74	3.0	3.1	2.6
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	-	80,805.2	74,448.5	69,383.5		8.5	7.3
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	124.5	120.0	116.2	113.3	3.8	3.3	2.6
PRODUCTION - BC								
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	36,677.3	41,050.7	41,012.9	39,879.3	-10.7	0.1	2.8
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,717	4,736	4,932	4,724	-0.4	-4.0	4.4
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	846	1,059	1,076	1,135	-20.1	-1.6	-5.2
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,917	1,960	1,877	1,841	-2.2	4.4	2.0
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	21,131.0	25,571.0	27,082.0		-17.4	-5.6
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	1,670.6	1,765.7	2,019.0		-5.4	-12.5
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	-	35,291.7	31,892.8	31,201.3		10.7	2.2
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	-	62,021.4	67,811.2	60,495.6		-8.5	12.1
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million		5,620.4	4,924.8	3,674.5		14.1	34.0
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	2,362.2	2,333.2	2,405.2	2,403.1	1.2	-3.0	0.1
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	43,102.1	44,552.5	43,212.5	42,146.9	-3.3	3.1	2.5
GENERAL								
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	39.2	36.4	34.7	32.9	7.6	5.1	5.3
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	1,353.7	1,800.9	2,068.3	1,955.8	-24.8	-12.9	5.8
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	12,540.3	11,541.5	10,182.9	7,938.7	8.7	13.3	28.3
Residential-BC*	$Million	8,612.4	7,620.7	6,970.8	5,868.9	13.0	9.3	18.8
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	3,927.9	3,920.8	3,212.1	2,069.8	0.2	22.1	55.2
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	56,369.5	52,626.9	49,286.3	47,216.6	7.1	6.8	4.4
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	53,375.9	50,724.8	47,277.0	43,497.7	5.2	7.3	8.7
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	-	1,822.2	1,690.1	1,592.2		7.8	6.2
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	470	587	786	922	-19.9	-25.3	-14.8
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	6,650	7,021	8,173	8,378	-5.3	-14.1	-2.4
Incorporations-BC*	Number	30,841	30,667	28,593	25,428	0.6	7.3	12.4
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	31,283.2	33,468.2	34,167.3	31,007.8	-6.5	-2.0	10.2
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	42,086.1	39,912.2	33,254.2	29,664.7	5.4	20.0	12.1
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Thousands of Persons	4,380,256	4,320,255	4,260,246	4,203,807	1.4	1.4	1.3

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

- indicates not yet available

n/a = not applicable

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ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions $Cdn)							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	na	180,328	169,404	157,365	-	6.4	7.7
Real Gross Domestic Product **(chained 2002 $)**	na	158,335	153,208	146,629	-	3.3	4.5
CANADA (Millions $Cdn)							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	na	1,446,307	1,375,080	1,290,828	-	5.2	6.5
Real GDP at Market Prices **(chained 2002 $)**	na	1,282,204	1,247,780	1,210,656	-	2.8	3.1
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,843.0	13,194.7	12,433.9	11,685.9	4.9	6.1	6.4
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,567.3	11,319.4	11,003.4	10,675.8	2.2	2.9	3.1

*** US Department of Commerce (actual)*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

	Feb. 27/08	Feb. 20/08	Jan. 30/08	Feb. 28/07
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00
Bank Rate	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50
Marketable Government Bond Rate (over 10 years)	4.14	4.22	4.17	4.10
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	7.25	7.25	7.35	6.50
- 5 Years	7.29	7.29	7.39	6.65
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	6.00	6.00	6.50	8.25
EXCHANGE RATES	AVERAGE NOON SPOT RATE			
US Dollar	0.9778	1.0190	0.9937	1.1700
Japanese Yen	0.0092	0.0094	0.0093	0.0099
British Pound	1.9480	1.9772	1.9754	2.2946
Euro	1.4795	1.4941	1.4688	1.5479

FORECASTS

	Real Gross Domestic Product			Unemployment Rate		Consumer Price Index	
	2007	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
	% Change	*% Change*	*% Change*	*%*	*%*	*% Change*	*% Change*
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
BC Government (February 2008, Budget)	3.0	2.4	2.8	4.7	4.8	1.8	2.1
Credit Union Central BC (February 2008)	3.2	3.0	3.0	4.1	4.2	2.2	2.3
Conference Board of Canada (October 19, 2007)	2.9	3.0	3.1	4.0	4.0	na	na
Scotia Bank Group (February 8, 2008)	3.0	2.8	3.2	4.1	4.0	na	na
TD Bank (January 10, 2008)	3.2	2.8	3.2	4.3	4.2	1.7	2.3
CIBC WM Economics (October 26, 2007)	3.3	3.3	na	4.2	na	2.2	na
Global Insight (January 2008)	3.1	2.9	3.0	4.2	4.5	2.1	2.2
CANADA							
TD Bank (January 10, 2008)	2.5	1.9	2.5	6.0	6.1	1.4	2.0
CIBC WM Economics (February 21, 2008)	2.5	2.0	na	6.1	na	2.3	na
Global Insight (February 2008)	2.6	1.9	2.5	6.2	6.2	1.7	2.0
UNITED STATES							
TD Bank (December 13, 2007)	-	1.8	2.8	5.3	5.6	2.3	1.8
CIBC WM Economics (February 21, 2008)	-	1.6	na	5.2	na	4.0	na
Global Insight (February 2008)	-	1.4	2.2	5.3	5.6	2.5	1.6

na: not available

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